

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the careful and thorough examination of the present application.

Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 9, 14, 17-19 and 17 to address the informalities previously pointed out by the Examiner and to further define the claimed invention over the prior art. Applicants have amended Claims 1-5, 7, 9-11, 14, 17-19, and 22-23 to address minor informalities.

Applicants submit that all claims are patentable, present arguments and amendments herein supporting such patentability, and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all pending rejections and allow all claims.

I. The Amended Claims

The present invention, as recited in amended independent Claim 1, for example, is directed to a communications system that may comprise a plurality of e-mail account databases, each configured to store information associated with different e-mail accounts. The communications system may comprise a central database configured to store location information associating each e-mail account with a respective e-mail account database, and shared system setup information for accessing the plurality of e-mail account databases, a communications device configured to access e-mail account information, and an interface device. The interface device may be configured to receive an e-mail account access request from the communications device for a desired e-mail account, and retrieve and cache e-mail account location information from the central database for the desired e-mail

account, and initially interface the communications device with the respective e-mail account database based upon the e-mail account location information. The interface device may be configured to use the cached e-mail account location information for interfacing of the communications device with the respective account database subsequent to the initial interfacing without further communication with the central database, and retrieve and cache the shared system setup information of the respective e-mail account database to interface the communications device with the respective e-mail account database.

Amended independent Claim 9 is directed to an interface device sub-combination, and has been similarly amended. Amended independent Claim 14 is directed to a method counterpart to Claim 1, and has been similarly amended. Amended independent Claim 17 is directed to a related computer-readable medium, and has been similarly amended.

II. The Amended Claims Are Patentable

The Examiner rejected independent Claims 1, 9, 14, and 17 over Arnold et al. in view of Rierden et al. and Skene et al. Arnold et al. discloses a communication system comprising a client 102, a plurality of e-mail host servers 114a-114n, and a proxy server coupled between the client and the e-mail host servers. The proxy server is configured to provide the client a combined integrated e-mail view of all e-mail account inboxes for a particular user. The communication system also includes a mail registration database 108 for storing user ID, account numbers, ISP, and Internet addressing for the e-mail accounts. The user may make deletions and other related e-mail commands in

the combined e-mail view, which are transferred via the proxy server to the individual e-mail host for that account. (Col. 2, line 51 through Col. 3, line 64).

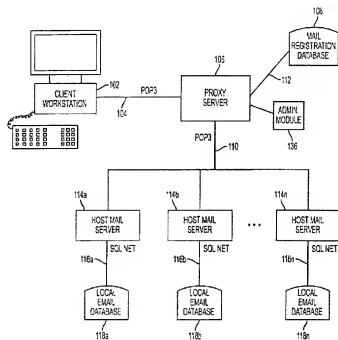


Figure 2 of Arnold et al.

Rierden et al. discloses a subscriber management system that includes at least one Data Directory Server (DDS) located between one or more transaction generators and one or more data servers. The DDS routes transactions and provides data location functions. Based upon internal rules within the DDS and the particular transaction type, the DDS routes transactions to the appropriate servers. Transactions are classified according to where they may be executed. Specifically, transactions may be classified as SPECIFIC, ANY, or ALL. (Col. 4, lines 11-28). The system of Rierden et al. further comprises an X-REF server for storing the location

information, global tables, so the DDS accesses the correct data server based upon the data needed by the transaction request. (Col. 8, lines 31-39).

Skene et al. discloses a method for resolving a domain name for virtual servers to an IP address of a related database, which may be distributed geographically. When the user makes a request for resources at a domain name, a local cache of resolved IP addresses is checked, and if the domain name is stored therein, the user is provided the cached IP address. If the resolved IP address for the domain name is not stored in the cache, the IP address is looked up.

Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed combination of prior art references fails to disclose or fairly suggest each feature of the claimed invention. In particular, the proposed combination fails to disclose using the cached e-mail account location information for interfacing of the communications device with the respective account database subsequent to the initial interfacing without further communication with the central database, as recited by amended independent Claim 1. Differently, Skene et al. relates to caching IP addresses for domain names, rather than the cached e-mail account location information for subsequent interfacing of the communications device with the respective account database subsequent to the initial interfacing of the communications device. Arnold et al. and Rierden et al. also fail to make up for this deficiency.

Accordingly, it is submitted that amended independent Claims 1, 9, 14, and 17 are patentable over the prior art. Their respective dependent claims, which recite yet further

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distinguishing features, are also patentable over the prior art and require no further discussion herein.

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CONCLUSIONS

In view of the amendments to the claims and the arguments presented above, it is submitted that all of the claims are patentable. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested in due course. Should any minor informalities need to be addressed, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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